

First Sunday Advent 2017

The Third Commandment.

Exodus 20:1-17

Remember to keep the Sabbath Day.

Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God. No work may be done then either by you or your slave.

In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, but on the seventh day he rested.

That is why the Lord has blessed the Sabbath Day and made it holy.

Deuteronomy 5: 1-20

Take care to keep holy the Sabbath Day as the Lord, your God, commanded you.

Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God. No work may be done then. Your slave should rest as you do.

For remember that you too were once slaves in Egypt, and the Lord, your God, brought you from there with his strong hand and outstretched arm.

That is why the Lord, your God, has commanded you to observe the Sabbath Day.

Last week we made the beautiful discovery that God gave each of a personal conscience. The Ten Commandments, the Eight Beatitudes, and the Seven Sacraments employ our personal conscience. Because our conscience is personally unique, our observance of the Ten Commandments and the Eight Beatitudes and our devotion to the Seven Sacraments will have a personal element. Pope Benedict compares conscience to the equally mysterious gift of language. Each child has a gift for spoken language at birth. The child will learn to use that gift from infancy without the aid of teachers. The language learned will depend on the surroundings. But after infancy the child will need to take grammar classes, learn new vocabulary, and the like in order to become proficient in the skill of communication. Our conscience has strikingly similar growth needs. A little child knows that a lie is wrong and that telling the truth can be a difficult choice. With growth and maturity the child will need a teacher in order to become a holy person. Pope Benedict writes, "Conscience requires growth, training, and practice." (See On Conscience, p61)